NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

Among the tracts of late issue from the press that have within a few days reached our hands, our attention was attracted by one entitled "*Tah-gah-jute, or Logan, and Capt. Michael Cresap*," being a Discourse delivered by BRANTZ MAYER, Esq., of Baltimore, before the Maryland Historical Society, on the 9th of last May.

The main object of this Discourse is to vindicate *the Cresap Family* from the imputation thrown upon Capt. MICHAEL CRESAP, in Jefferson's Notes upon Virginia and contemporary traditions and publications, as having been the cold-blooded murderer of the Family of LOGAN, a distinguished Indian Chief of that day. This task of redeeming from cruel calumny the fame of one of the earliest descendants of the original settlers of Maryland, Mr. MAYER has executed not only with much ability, but with an industry and minuteness of research which do honor to his fidelity and accuracy as a historian.

We do not propose to follow Mr. MAYER in tracing, through all its tortuous windings, from its original source, or rather want of source, the imputation upon Capt. CRESAP of having been the author of the butchery of LOGAN's family. It is enough to say that the evidence which he has produced goes wholly to absolve his name and fame from that reproach.

There are, however, in the Discourse before us, two main passages which, as their perusal has been full of interest to us, will, we doubt not, be of equal interest to others, and especially to the descendants of the original colonists, and of those pioneers who …etrated, and then peopled, the Wilderness first pe… We extract them, therefore, west of tide-wate… as follows.

THE COLONIZATION OF THIS CONTINE…

Nearly three hundred and sixty years have passed since this Western World was revealed to mankind by the discovery of Columbus, and though three centuries and a half afford ample time for the doing of many deeds, yet scarcely a year elapses without adding some new marvel to the influences of America upon the progressive civilization and comfort of the human race.

If we look on the map, at the portion of this Continent occupied by us at present, we are amazed at the vast expansion of our territorial limits within much less than one-third of this time. In the middle of the last century the British dominions in America were but a fringe upon the Atlantic shores. Beginning in the Bay of Fundy, their outline ran southwestwar…dly, skirting the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, until it touch…ed the northern spurs of the Alleghanies, and then, desce…ding along the slopes of those mountains, it struck the northe…rnmost angle of Florida, and finally terminated on the Atlan…tic at the mouth of the Alatamaha. The average breadth … of this scant region was not more than five degrees. West a… northwest lay the vast primeval forests, the gigantic lakes a…d rivers, claimed by the French as Canada and the Provin…ce of Louisiana; while south, on the Gulf of Mexico and t…he Atlantic, stretched the romantic shores of Florida, unde…r the dominion of Spain. It was not until the epoch of the I…ndian troubles, of which I am about to speak, and on the eve of our Revolutionary war, that the Ohio became the recognis…ed boundary between the white and the red man; and h…e who now entering one of those floating palaces of the weste…rn waters at Brownsville, and descending the Ohio to the M…ississippi, and the Mississippi to the Gulf, can hardly belie…ve that within less than eighty years the whole of this mag…nificent region, where the progress of trade has not effaced all traces of romantic nature, was still a dreary and dangerous wilderness, tenanted alone by the wild beast, or by human beings almost as savage. There are men still living who recollect the legends of Indian warfare or foray in Maryland, Pennsylvania, or Virginia, and can recount the escape or the death of some ancestor by the tomahawk and scalping knife. There are those amongst us, too, whose hair is still unsilvered, who may remember their sport as boys in watching the straggling Indians—half beggars, half bandits—who every winter thronged our streets, but whose only use of the bow and the arrow was to win the pennies we ventured in order to test the sureness of their aim.

But where, even now, is the "Far West," which in those days was spoken of as something mysteriously indefinite—as something denoting perils of journey and Indian cruelty? It was then that we had still territorial boundaries to settle with Britain, and titles as well as rights to adjust with stubborn tribes. It was then that the far-seeing and comprehensive merchant laid the foundation of his wealth by tracking the beaver in its wildest haunts in Oregon. It was then that California was remembered as a field of romantic missionary labor, cherished under Mexican Viceroys, but as a land of abandoned enterprise. It was then that our young and restless spirits sought the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi as homes which were beginning to be fully redeemed from the hunter and the savage. That was the Far West of those days. But now, strange names salute our ears, sounding no more of Indian conquests, but commemorative monuments as long as language shall last of victories over civilized men. We have abandoned an Indian nomenclature and adopted the calendar of Christian saints. Santa Fé, the Rio Bravo del Norte—the Colorado of the West—the Pecos—the Gila—the Valleys of San Juan and Santa Clara—the Plains of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and the upland Vale at the foot of Mount Shastl—the Great Basin, around whose saline waters the Mormon enthusiasts have nestled, seeking refuge among the savages from the bigoted persecutions of civilization—Monterey—San Francisco—San Diego—Chrysopolæ or the Golden Gates; and, last of all, the Pacific itself for an acknowledged boundary, and the Isthmus for a highway! There is no longer a "Far West." States, now planting on the brink of the Pacific and washed by its surge, curb, in that direction, the utmost possible limit of our dominion. Gold, in apparently inexhaustible quantities, has magnetically attracted an immense population in the brief space of three years. The first great experiment of planting the Anglo-Saxon race on the Pacific, facing the Indies with a clear and short highway in front, is no longer a problem to be solved. The tide of emigration sets no more exclusively from East to West, but rapidly ebbs and surges backward, as China, Hindustan, the Australian colonies, the Pacific Islands, the Chilian, Peruvian, and Mexican States pour their motley crowds of eager immigrants along the whole coast from the Gila to the Columbia. The icy tops of the Sierra Nevada are passed, and the great upland Basin of Utah becomes the thoroughfare of traders, pilgrims, and caravans from the far East. Through the wilderness to Santa Fé, and thence along the Southern passes of the mountains, other crowds press each other, to and fro, on the path of the modern Ophir. And thus, in the progress of a few brief years, the swollen tides of humanity, bursting the barriers of the Alleghanies from the East, and of the Nevada from the West, must at last meet and mingle in the great valley of the Mississippi, which is destined to become the central mart of our mighty Union.

In God's genial providence of gradually opening the resources of this world for the progress of mankind there is the most perfect accommodation to the enlarging wants and capacities of our race. Every thing is not disclosed at once. The good, the desirable, the necessary, are hidden away in the earth's secret places, and the task of laborious enterprise is imposed on man for their discovery and useful preparation. Yet, marvellous as are the modern developments of industry, of science, and sometimes even of apparent chance, there is no exhaustion in these resources; for new means of success seem to keep constant pace with each new labor and enterprise. Our Beneficent Parent works out his wonderful schemes by human agents, not by miracles. Humanity, with all its virtues and all its sins, is charged with the noble task of *free development;* and thus the results become the work of man, and are made the trials and tests of his responsibility.

The Old World became crowded, and space was required in which the cramped and burdened millions might find room for industry and independence—and a new Continent was suddenly disclosed for their occupation. The old political systems of Europe and of the Eastern nations decayed in consequence of the encroachments of individual power made despotic by corruption or force—and a virgin country was forthwith opened as a refuge for the oppressed masses, in which the principle of absolute political and religious freedom might be tried without any convulsive effort to cast off the fetters of feudalism. The labor of man, even in this new world, began to strip commercial countries of their forests, or made them too valuable for fuel; and suddenly the heart of the earth is found to be veined with minerals which will save the lives of the majestic monarchs who shade and shelter the surface. Coal thus becomes the most potent agent in commercial development; for, without it, the seas could not be traversed with the rapidity and certainty that modern wants exact. The increasing industry and invention of the largely augmented populations of various countries required either a greater amount of capital to represent their productions, or a new standard of value for the precious metals already in circulation; and at once, apparently by mere accident, an adventurer discovered, amid the frosts and forests of the Pacific, a golden region in which the fabled sands of Pactolus are realized. At last, even steam itself becomes too slow for mankind, and human skill, chaining magnetism to its purposes, and lacing the earth with its wires, embroiders the whole world with the electricity of thought. But all these vast storehouses of invention, comfort, and wealth are not placed at our doors, in the midst of civilization, ready to be grasped, comprehended, or used with equal ease by the dainty idler or the patient worker. Far away in distant regions they lie. Far away amid forests and perils. Far away in lands which are reached by dreary voyages. Far away—requiring the renewal of hope in desponding hearts, and renewal of energies in broken men. There they lie—long concealed and wisely garnered temptations—to be discovered at the appropriate moment in the world's progress, and to lead man thither as the founder of a new field of human industry.

In this genial development of our globe three classes of persons have always been needed: the Discoverer, the Conqueror, and the Pioneer.

Emigration is the overflowing of a bitter cup. Men do not ordinarily leave their native lands and kindred for the perils of the wilderness, or for a country with which they have no community of laws, language, or present interest, unless poverty or bad government crowds them into the forest. When the Discoverer and the Conqueror have found the land and partly tamed the savage, the Pioneer advances into their field of relinquished enterprise, and his task partakes, in some degree, of the dangers incurred by both his predecessors. He is always a lover and seeker of independence, and generally pursues it with a laudable desire to improve his lot; yet the perfect exercise of this independence sometimes becomes selfishly exclusive. Its essence, in our country, is the complete self-reliance of the one man or the one family. This spirit of social, political, and industrial independence occasionally becomes wild, impatient, and uncontrollable. Its mildest exhibition under such circumstances is in rude manners or wayward lawlessness, which outraged neighborhoods are wont summarily to redress. True civilized liberty does not countenance such mockers of justice within its pale, and thus there are multitudes who not only go voluntarily and wisely into new lands, but other heedless or scoffing crowds are scourged by society into the sombre forest. Slowly and surely are these elements of new States gathered, purged, and crystallized around the centres of modern civilization. Hope, ambition, misery, avarice, adventure, noble purpose drive off impatient men who will not be satisfied with the slow, dripping accretions of wealth in the old communities. They require fortune and position by a leap. Independence demands space for the gigantic inspirations of its vast lungs, and flies headlong to the forest. The wandering woodsman or hunter gathers his brothers in armed masses for protection amid this chaos of unorganized freedom, and they support each other cheerfully in seasons of danger or disease. But the social law of humanity vindicates itself against the eager spirit of perfect independence. Wherever man who has once either drained or sipped the cup of civilization is found, there must he be fed and clothed, nor does he cease to yearn for the relinquished luxuries, amusements, or comforts of the home he abandoned … the eastern mountains. Wherever man goes, man's …—pursues him; and secretly he longs beyond … civilization which he feigns to representative—… …bait the forest like for the pleasing results of that … despise. Thus the Pioneer may be said … a trap for the Trader. Taking up the war with the Indian where the Conqueror left it, he at once subdues the soil and the savage. The Farmer, at length, plants himself on the land that the Ranger wrests from the Indian. The Merchant covers with his sails the seas that were scourged by the Pirate. The dollar dulls the edge of the bowie knife. Where the Pioneer treads the Missionary follows. Element by element, civilization drops in. Peace, like a cooling shadow, follows the blaze of war. Death closes the career of the primeval Forester, and the law of God, vindicating by its perfect ultimate success the merit of Peace, whose triumphs are the only true ones, plants the Trader and the Farmer on his grave, and that which was wildly won is quietly and permanently enjoyed.

THE PIONEERS.

You will recollect that it was only a few years after Pontiac's war that small settlements of whites had crept westward through the defiles of the Alleghanies and along the principal paths, the northernmost of which converged at old Fort Du Quesne or Pitt, whilst the southernmost led to the fountains of the Holston and the Clinch. A town was laid out on the east bank of the Monongahela, within two hundred yards of Fort Pitt, and, for seventy miles above it, a route had been cut through the wilderness to "Red Stone Old Fort," near the mouth of Dunlap's creek, now the site of Brownsville.

About the year 1774 Virginia still *claimed*, by virtue of her charter, all the territory between the parallels of 36° 30′ and 39° 40′ north latitude, from the margin of the Atlantic due west to the Mississippi, and thus enclosed within her assumed limit not only the region which at present is comprised in Kentucky, but also the southern half of Illinois, one-third of Ohio, and an extensive part of Western Pennsylvania. Settlements had been planted upon most of the *eastern* branches of the Monongahela, the Youghiogeny, and on the small *eastern* tributaries of the upper Ohio, for one hundred and twenty miles below Pittsburgh, as well as on the sources of the Greenbrier, the Little Kenhawa and Elk river, west of the mountains, embracing in these districts the northwestern counties of Virginia and the southwestern of Pennsylvania as at present defined. Pittsburgh was claimed as a frontier town of Virginia, while the southern settlements on the tributaries of the Monongahela were held to belong to the same province. Yet the vast region south of the Little Kenhawa and westward thence to the Mississippi, with but slight exceptions, was a perfect wilderness, held by savages. The lonely isolated settlement of a few poor, ignorant French colonists on the Wabash and Illinois rivers had, it is true, fallen under British dominion after the peace of Paris, but these immigrants were scarcely regarded as British subjects, and were held as outlying foreign military colonists, more than a thousand miles in advance of civilization, having but little interest or sympathy with the pioneers who penetrated the wilderness from Virginia, Pennsylvania, or Maryland.

The French and Indian wars, and the true pioneer spirit which characterized so many Americans at that day, had sprinkled this region of woods, mountains, and rivers with bold, enterprising woodsmen, traders, hunters, and agriculturists, and with lion-hearted women, who were proper mates for men stamped with so much energy and fortitude in the iron mintage of border trial. The majority of this enterprising class was hardy and virtuous, though, as in all such frontier communities, the honest and daring were followed by miscreants who were willing either to shelter themselves from law in the wilderness or to encounter the risks of a wild life without caring for ultimate results. But the pioneer was a liberal and hospitable being, for he appreciated the loneliness and discomforts of his own perilous lot, and was prompt to ameliorate the condition of all who ventured beyond the Alleghanies. His fringed and fanciful hunting shirt, which may still be found among the mountains of our own Cumberland; his deer-skin leggings; his gaily embroidered moccasins; his tomahawk and scalping-knife; his bullet pouch, powder horn, and ready rifle, made up his personal equipments of comfort and defence. He was a picturesque being as he was beheld descending the slopes of the mountains or relieved against the blue sky or the dark shadows of the forest. In his lonely region no mechanics were to be hired, and every pioneer was obliged to do his own work or to possess within his family the necessary elements of labor in the field or at the plough, the loom, and the anvil. His gun was in constant use against the Indian as well as the bear and the deer. Yet never was he an ungenerous neighbor when a new cabin was to be erected for an immigrant or a crop to be gathered for the friend who inhabited his district. The "husking match" and the "log-rolling" are distinctly recorded among the kindly and helping memorials of early settlements, in those days when the genuine "cabin," made without nails, mortar, or bricks, was the home of many an ancestry that has given rulers to our Union. A common danger cemented these forest settlements in a bond of mutual defence and interest. It was a life of incessant wariness or of peril to be encountered, and thus mutual dependence and the fear of the savage formed the best police of the pioneer, for it warned off weak and irresolute interlopers, and permitted none but the hardy and true to abide in the forest.

Nor were these men so improvident as to omit strengthening themselves, not only by social acts of faith and friendship, but by supplying their bands with forts, block-houses, and stations, constructed of massive logs and slabs, proof against bullets, and built around or near a never-failing spring. These defences, constructed at points easy of access as places of refuge to a whole neighborhood of agriculturists or hunters, were perfect safeguards against a foe who had no artillery, but were rarely tenanted unless at periods of general alarm, or when the pioneers left their farms in the spring upon the announcement of some Indian murder in the vicinity.

These adopted children of the wilderness were, of course, not unskilled in woodcraft. The stars, the sun, the bark of trees were their guides. The weather informed the settler whether he was to encounter his game for the day on the mountain tops, the hill sides, or in the valleys; and when "the buck" was slain, skinned, and dressed, the early night was passed in glee and story around the fire of his joyous "hunting camp." Witchcraft was firmly believed by many of them, for strange sights and sounds and a lonely life gave play to the imagination or to the recollection of old superstitions learned in infancy. Singing, dancing, shooting the rifle, throwing the tomahawk, wrestling, and all athletic or manly sports formed the constant diversions of the settlers when they were at leisure or on remembered holydays; while the most boisterous merriment prevailed at wedding frolics or at the "house-warming" of the forest bride and her gallant groom. Lawyers and judges were unknown in these rough and simple communities, yet a strong moral sense and the stern demands of duty preserved rights and interests in regions where no man could afford to be idle. Debts were but little known. Laziness, dishonesty, and ill-fame roused the general public opinion of the settlement. Thieves were flogged. Personal disputes were settled by battles with fists, after which the parties became reconciled; and evil men, in the emphatic language of the day, were "hated out of the neighborhood."

The wants of these backwoodsmen required an annual visit to the East, and every autumn associations were formed for the yearly caravan, which, with its long trains of horses, bearing peltries and Indian ware, might be heard tinkling its bells in the forests or along the mountain defiles as it wound its way to Hagerstown, Old Town, Cumberland, and Baltimore to exchange the products of the wilderness for salt, iron, lead and powder.

CENTRAL EUROPE AND ASIA.

A spirit is moving on the earth, a spirit of change, of revolution, and a spirit coeval within man in the aggregate, as united by accident, choice, or force into National Aggregation. A general comparison between the great land continental surfaces of our globe would reveal contrasts of very remarkable character, and such as to explain and determine much of the moving causes of former history, and afford data of great value in our estimates of futurity. Hitherto, as cause and effect, too much credit has been given to human design, and that whilst the exciting and controlling laws of Nature, in reverse proportion, have been overlooked or regarded superficially. It would excite doubts of its accuracy on the minds of many otherwise well informed persons, when they were first told that there exists on the earth's surface, in a direction not very materially deviating twenty degrees from mean latitude 58° N., and in continuity, a space rather exceeding five thousand miles having no oceanic discharge. Such a region has, nevertheless, a positive, and, from time to time, has had a fearful political existence, and, from its western extremity in Europe to its eastern in Asia, comprises every variety of soil, from that of exuberant fertility to the most sterile desert. Within its limits originated, in comparative mordern times, revolutions which shook Asia and Europe to their utmost borders. Karakum or Holin, in Chinese Mongolia, was the seat of the Empire of Zengzis Khan, and from whence, from the latter part of the twelfth century of the christian era, to the middle of the thirteenth, made Eastern and much of Central Asia fields of blood and ruin.

The decline of the House of Zenghis was attended and followed by that of Tamerlane. The latter originated early in the fifteenth, and scourged Central and Western Asia through the first half of that century. The original seat of this Power was between the Caspian and Aral seas. Fatuity alone, we may repeat, can cause indifference to such sections of the earth as have produced so much of human history; and where, however great may be political or national change, the intrinsic constitution of nature, in the earth and in MAN, remains stable. Morally and intellectually, it is probable that the nations who inhabit this immense region are as far advanced in the scale of improvement as were Europeans in general five centuries past. What time has accomplished, with the same element, it is consonant to all exprience to regard recurrence probable. Fatuity alone can overlook the … annually more and more apparent, that one … which is to "*give* reality, becoming … of those mighty convulsions are in prog… *new names to nations and new divisions to courts.*"

The changes, past embryo, and in acknowledged progress, which are in development in Asia, Europe, and America, can only form the introductory chapters to modern history. In the great invasion from Central Asia, China and Japan did not escape, but, though scourged, they survived the storm. Russia for more than two centuries groaned under the iron rule of the Mongols; but the tide of power has taken a fearful reflux, or has formed, or is forming, a still more fearful whirlpool, threatening a deluge. It is fitful in motion, but constant in direction.

But, to resume our geographical review: The extreme northwestern projection of this great inland region comes within one hundred miles of the Gulf of Finland, at St. Petersburgh, and about a like distance from Wytegra, on Lake Ladoga. On the Eastern or Pacific extreme it reaches to within three hundred miles of the Yellow Sea, and on the earth's surface extends in continuity through eighty-eight degrees of longitude, on the mean latitude of forty-five. Any line, however, drawn within its limits, from eastern to western extremity, would exceed five thousand miles. On longitude sixty-five east of London this tract extends in breadth due north from latitude 28° to 52°, or about sixteen hundred and sixty miles, crossing Beloochistan, Cabul, Great Bucharia, Khokan, and Kirguis. This line of greatest breadth does not materially depart from mid-distance, from the sources of the Wolga, in Europe, to those of the Amur, in Asia, or two thousand two hundred miles from each. Within all its perimeter, the area falls so little under that we may assume for each section at least one million of square English miles. The western part, from the Beloor Mountains, comprising more than half the whole surface, and including the Caspian and Aral Basins, differs essentially in character from the eastern; the former, in no part sterile desert, sustains a considerable density of population; the eastern, except the Basin of the Yarkand, is in the far greater part desert in the full extent of the term.

This very remarkable region, in all its extent, is possessed by three Empires—Russia west and north, Persia in the mid-distance, and most southern, and China southeastward—the Beloor Mountains forming the separating boundary between Russia and China. Persia, a name which seems to come as an echo from the farthest recesses of history, still sustains a political existence, and fills the space from the Caspian Sea southward to the Persian Gulf, more than half its surface within the interior region under review.

Taking the whole region under one scope of vision, it is evident that if it could be seen by a telescopic view, at a like distance, this region of the earth would present a very marked resemblance to that of the moon, as thus viewed from the earth. With these general observations we proceed to a more specific review.

Commencing on the southern extreme at north latitude 28° and longitude 58° east of London, and from thence not materially deviating from due north, we set out from Kerman, or Southern Persia, not two hundred miles from the Persian Gulf, and thence passing between the Caspian and Aral Seas, and thence again along the Ural Mountains to north latitude 62°, or through 34° of latitude, and to within an immaterial fraction of two thousand five hundred English miles, not a stream of any consequence is passed. It may not be out of place to observe that this line, if extended to the Persian Gulf, would form a far more definite and natural boundary between Europe and Asia than the vague one adopted in ages of ignorance and perpetuated by habit. As standing on the face of nature, the supposed boundary pointed out forms the eastern limit of the Caspian region, in many essential respects the most remarkable on the surface of the earth. Firstly, it has a base of twenty-five hundred miles from the Mountain of Laristan on the south, to the northeastern fountains of the Kama river on the north; secondly, the surface of the Caspian Sea is by actual measurement upwards of three hundred and twenty feet below that of the Black Sea, and of course the most depressed water surface on this planet. Into this deep water expanse is poured from the north the streams of the Wolga and Ural rivers, from the westward those of the Araxis, and others of less note, and from the southward the drain of a very narrow border between the Elborus Mountains and the southern shore of the Caspian. The eastern shore of the Caspian receives no stream worthy of notice.

The Caspian Sea is from south to north about seven hundred miles in length, and from east to west two hundred mean width; surface one hundred and forty thousand square miles; the whole Basin eight hundred thousand square miles.

Eastwardly from the great base line of the Caspian Basin extends another basin belonging to the same natural section, and remarkably similar in the principles of formation and physical character. The latter known as the Aral Basin, from the name of Aral Sea or Lake; another Caspian on a smaller scale. The Aral having length of about three hundred miles, with a mean breadth little above one hundred miles; mean latitude 44° north. Space between the two seas, in most part a sterile desert, of a mean breadth of about three hundred miles; longitude 60° east. London passes over the Aral.

If extended southward to the fountains flowing northward and inward, and having no oceanic discharge, the Aral Basin or *region* stretches from the mountains of Kerman, N. latitude 28°, or within two hundred miles of the Arabian sea, and comprises the immense space between the Basin of the Caspian on the western side, and that of the Indus east, and from thence spreads northwards to N. latitude 50°, or to opposite the sources of the Oby. Within the perimeter of the Aral region, besides the lake from which the general name is derived, there are others of lesser note, and also many brief streams, lost amongst rocks and sand. Two rivers, however, of considerable length of course and volume, enter the Aral from the south. The Amoo river, formed by numerous branches issuing from the Hindoo Koosh Mountains, and opposite to the northwestern sources of the Indus, flowing northwestwardly about one thousand miles general course, discharging its volume into the southern shore of the Aral, which also receives the Sihoon into its northeastern angle. The peculiar features of this part of Asia appear here in exaggeration. The maps of this region, not very consistent with each other, in general agree, however, in representing a prolongation southwardly of the Ural Mountains, though locally under different names. Tracing the broken links, it is doing no great violence to system when we regard this chain as crossing Asia from the Northern ocean to Cape Comorin. That part of the system which crosses the great central region under review, in a very near north and south direction, along longitude 68° E. of London, gives source to numerous rivers, of more or less length of course. Of these, between latitudes 40° and 50° N., the Sihoon is the only one deserving particular notice. This stream becomes a great river in seasons of rain or melting snows, but broken into detached branches in late summer and autumn.

The Aral basin has an extent from south to north of eighteen hundred miles, with a mean breadth of six hundred miles, and comprises an area exceeding a million of square miles. Taken together, we have, between latitudes north 28° and 60° and longitudes 28 and 68°, east of London, the inland basins of the Caspian and Aral, comprising one million eight hundred thousand square miles, or about the one twenty-sixth part of the whole land area of the earth. On the Beloor Mountains, separating the Basins of Aral and the Yarkand river, we are very near mid-distance from the northwestern sources of the Wolga to those of the Amoor river. The western section between the sources of the Yarkand and Wolga contain more than two-thirds of the whole surface of the space under review, and perhaps four-fifths of the habitable area; the eastern part, in great excess desert, which feature operates far more effectually to morally and physically separate Northern and Southern Asia from each other than would a sea tenfold its breadth. This eastern section also has a considerably greater extension from west to east, though with less breadth from north to south.

Another view, not alone extremely interesting, but highly important in human history, opens to us from the Beloor summits, lat. 40° N. Here are the bounds where the power of China or Eastern Asia has penetrated; or very nearly mid-distance, three thousand miles each direction, east or west, from the Hellespont or Yellow Sea.

Mentally standing on the Beloor Mountains, lat. 42° N., and looking eastward, we would have before us Little Bucharia, or Chinese Turkestan, one of those interior detached basins so characteristic of the great regions of Central Asia; with the Beloor Mountains west, and flanked on the north by the Thyan Khan, and on the south by the Kuen Luen Mountains. In the intermediate space rise and flow eastward the various streams forming the Yarkand river, which, after a course of about one thousand miles, is lost gradually in small lakes or sandy deserts.

Northward of Little Bucharia, and separated from it by the Thyan Khan Mountains, spreads a region vaguely known to us under the terms Soongaria, Turkestan, and Little Bucharia, with others still more obscure. Darkly as are those nations known to the far distant people of Europe and America, it was from those shadowy recesses that, at long intervals of time, have issued barbarous and warlike hordes, who have imprinted deep and sanguinary pages on the history of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. Though in all probability amongst the most early inhabited by man, this immense interior of Asia remains a region of mystery; as much, if not more so, than many large tracts of Africa, Australia, and America yet unknown, or imperfectly explored. These remarks apply to no confined surface. They embrace from the eastern shore of the Caspian sea to the sources of the rivers of China and Mandchuria, and from south to north, between the fountains of the rivers of Northern and Southern Asia, a space more extensive than all Europe non-Russian.

When, however, we turn from general to specific views, it must be carefully noticed that the western part is far from desert. The space between the fountains of the Indus and those of the Irtysh branch of the Oby, and in the same latitudes with Southern Europe and Asia Minor, and on a space as extensive as France and Spain taken together, spreads a habitable surface from which not one rill flows, though in its own limits a…bounding in streams.

The Beloor Mountains, however strange as it may seem, when we reach their summits, and have passed over rather more than three thousand miles, we have only reached, from Novogorod on the Ilmen, the mid-extent of the interior region under review. Setting out from the Beloor Mountains, and advancing eastwards, we have to traverse about three thousand more miles to reach western Mandchuria—the intermediate space being what geographers have designated the great Mongolian Desert.

Though the fountains of the Irtysh, Oby, Yeniesey, and Lena, the great rivers of Northern Asia, rise near the northern border of the Desert Mongolia, as do those of the Indus, Ganges, Irrawaddy, Blue, and Yellow rivers of China, on the southern, and the Amoor of Mandchuria on the eastern border, it is inadmissible to fix a definite boundary on either of these sides. In regard to extent, two millions and a half of square miles would be admissible. The whole data would sustain an estimate of five and a half millions of square English miles for the entire interior region of Europe and Asia, having no water communication with the oceans of the earth.

It ought to be premised that extending the term desert to mean unproductive sterility, and thus applying it to the very remarkable central region of Europe and Asia, would lead to very erroneous conclusions. The greatest part of the European share and a part of that of Asia is fertile, well watered and peopled. On the European part christianity and its accompaniments prevail, and many millions are there, in the enjoyment of civilization, with a large portion of its richest benefits. And to these observations we may add that in no other point of view is this section more remarkable than in forming the eastern boundary of christendom. East of the Caspian sea, on the great interior region, and beyond it to the Pacific ocean, christians are strangers. To the south spreads Persia, under the provincial names of Khorazin, Mazanderan, Irac Adjemi, Kherman, Segestan, and others still more obscure. The space between the Caspian and Aral seas bears the vague name of Turcomania, from that of a nation who for the last six centuries have engraven their name deep on the tablets of history.

With a very narrow intervening border along the Arabian sea, and extending northward from lat. 28° to 50°; or, in other words, from a near approach to the water of the Indian ocean, through upwards of fifteen hundred miles to the southern border of Asiatic Russia, we have, vaguely located, true, but real in themselves, and coeval with all of time, the events of which are in our records, provincial names, east of the Caspian sea, and westward of the Beloor Mountains, such as Beochistan, Cabul, Herat, Great Bucharia, Khiva, Khokan, TURKESTAN, Badakshan, Khorazin, &c. These countries, occupying the same latitudes as Southern and Central Europe and Northern Africa, have nourished nations, who have from time to time overpowered the greatly more numerous but much less warlike nations of the eastern and western peninsular parts of the same continent. It must be here understood that, though under different names, they are really only the eastern and western parts of the same continent.

It would appear, on a review of the earth, connected with the history of nations, that the outer and more or less peninsular deltas and banks of rivers, and insular parts, were most congenial to the rise, progress, and civilization of mankind, and, in brief, to the perpetuity of human society. China and Japan on the eastern, and all Europe on the western side of the eastern continent, afford strong data to sustain the theory. These great sections were, at all historical times, if not first peopled, they were the first and most enduring theatres on which social and intellectual life have gained and preserved their most beneficent and enduring pre-eminence.

Were a man, to appear with the requisite acquirements of impartiality, grasp of thought, knowledge of and proper estimate of the grandeur of the subject in all its details—pecuniary means, and powers of patient investigation, with those of physical endurance, and who would apply all his resources on a work dedicated to the geography and national history of the vast central regions of Europe and Asia—were these views realized, mankind would have given to them the most inappreciably valuable treasure yet to be bestowed by genius on human reason.

WILLIAM DARBY.

WASHINGTON, JULY 8, 1851.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT ON THE NEW HAVEN RAILROAD.—An accident occurred on the New Haven railroad on Wednesday afternoon, which resulted in the serious injury of a number of persons, although fortunately no lives were lost. The three o'clock accommodation train from New York, consisting of five cars, had arrived within about two miles of New Rochelle, when the axle of the car next to the last broke, and the shock was such as to separate the three hindmost cars from those in front. Two of the cars detached were thrown off the track, and one of them turned upside down. The other was also much broken, and wrenched across the track. So soon as those who were uninjured recovered from the shock, they proceeded to the relief of those who were less fortunate. The locomotive and two cars, which had gone on to the distance of nearly a mile before the accident was discovered by the engineer, also returned with the passengers to aid the sufferers, many of whom it was thought were killed. Upon examination, however, it was discovered that not a single life had been lost. It is truly wonderful that the results were not more calamitous. The following list is said to embrace all who are known to have been injured:

Mrs. Andrews, of Cleveland, Ohio; Miss Andrews, of Cleveland, Ohio; Mrs. Seymour, of Stamford; Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins and two children, of New York; Mr. E. S. Foster, wife, and daughter, of Indiana; Miss Clark, of Hartford; Mr. Dyer, of Ireland; Leroy Taylor, of Newtown, Conn.; H. L. Plumb, of Stockbridge, Mass.; Aaron Curtis, of Bristol; Charles Cooke, of Winsted; Charles Booth, of Stamford; Capt. Bassett, of Bridgeport; Smith Booth, of Bridgeport; a son of Isaac Berry, of Philadelphia; Wm. Bristling, of Gardiner, Me.; D. H. Lockwood, a brakeman; Mrs. and Miss Funnel, Misses Nason, Gregg, Powell, Moore, and Cogel, all of Gloucester, (N. J.) were slightly injured; a lady from Philadelphia was very badly bruised; and Miss Miller, of Massachusetts, is reported to be dead.

The wounded were taken forward to New Rochelle, where they were provided with beds at a hotel, and medical attendance was promptly procured. Dr. Haight and another physician from Stamford, and three medical gentlemen who were fortunately in the cars at the time, are aiding those resident at the place in giving every attention to the sufferers.

FATAL ACCIDENT.—As two of the girls working in the bookbindery of Jacob Bumstead, No. 22 Ann street, (N. Y.) were leaving their work on Monday evening, one stepped upon the trap-door, which gave way, and finding herself falling, she caught her companion's dress, and they both fell from the fourth to the first floor. One named Mary C. Dyke was so much injured that she died on the way to the hospital. The other, Catharine Brady, was severely bruised, but it is expected that she will recover.

SUDDEN DEATH.—Mrs. Wm. Webb, daughter of the late Benjamin Webb, of Wilmington, Delaware, was found dead in the bathing tub at her residence near Wilmington, on the 10th instant. It is supposed that the coldness of the water caused a sudden rush of blood to the head.

TO THE EDITORS.

WASHINGTON, JULY 17, 1851.

MESSRS. EDITORS: Little did I think, when scribbling a few remarks on coral formations, that I should be drawn into a maelstrom of discussion on this interesting subject; I was in hopes it would fall into better hands and be left to abler pens than my feeble crow quill. I have continued silent while anonymous writers have fired their paper pellets; but your correspondent, Mr. Schetterly, has written what he terms a reply to my article of the 21st of June. It is couched in such a chaste, classical, and scientific style, that I would deem myself uncourteous if I failed to renew the subject and correct a misapprehension himself and others have fallen into. His remarks are, that I have made an attempt to account for the phenomena of the diminution of the sea, on the supposition that shell fish and coral insects abstract from the water of the sea salt, lime, soda, &c., from which they manufacture their shells, the coral reefs, and the foundation of islands. He further remarks: "Mr. P. justly says, if one thousand 'pounds of water were taken from the sea, and shell fish 'and insects set to work in it, the remaining water, after 'they had formed their shells and rocks, would both weigh 'less and occupy less space than the quantity before they 'were set to work; but this affords him no argument, unless 'he supposes the shells and rocks to be taken out after they 'have been formed; for, if all be left together, there will be 'no diminution of weight or volume, so far as we know." In a scientific discussion we must prove, without supposition, unless to give weight to the argument, or an analogous case is supposed. I shall therefore endeavor to show that the theory advanced by me has not yet been refuted, either by suppositions or argument. I have started with the simple proposition that the ocean has diminished in liquids to the amount of solids abstracted from it by the zoophite and shell fish. This is my first proposition, and it was fully demonstrated in my article of the 21st June. My next statement was, that the shore lines of coasts had altered their form, in consequence of the gradual diminution or subsidence of the ocean. This was not argued as fully or as ably as it should have been; for, on the latter subject, I found that there was a variety of theories; most geologists attributing this circumstance to an upheaving of the land from volcanic action or internal fires. To have discussed that subject would have led me into the theory of the creation of mountains and islands from volcanic action, for which I had not the time to spare nor the inclination to enter into a detailed history of volcanic phenomena. I find your intelligent correspondent does not agree with the majority of geologists on this subject, and denies *in toto* the theory of upheaved mountains or islands. What has become of the Azores, towering seven thousand feet above the blue ocean? Where is balmy Madeira and the Deserters, the former rearing her volcanic summit among the clouds six thousand feet high? Where is Stromboli—dark, frowning, and fiery-top Stromboli—Sicily, and a host of others, all upheaved by volcanic action? Not only Lyell, … but the great majority, I may say all geologists, agree in that one point, that all protuberances have been caused by upheavings. But I must abandon this subject, as it is irrelevant, and has nothing to do with coral formations. Permit me to refer your correspondent to the seventh volume of the United States Exploring Expedition, and to the American Journal of Science and Arts, No. 3, July, page 25, for a treatise on coral islands and formations, by James D. Dana, and to Professor Silliman's analysis of coral formations. By casting your eye along the globe it will be found that the zoophites—these minute submarine architects—surround the world in a belt, between the parallels of 39° S. and 39° N. They are constantly forming solids from the liquid ocean. The waters of the oceans are composed of various substances, which in a great measure increases their bulk. These are held in solution, and occupy a large amount of space; so large that the zoophite has already abstracted sixteen million of square miles of solid material, and formed of it islands, reefs, &c. It is asserted and proved, by philosophical as well as chemical facts, that all bodies in a solid state (except ice) occupy a smaller space in the solid than they did in their liquid or gaseous form. The elements from which the zoophites form their mansions still exist, but in another form; they are no longer liquid, or make a portion of the waters of the ocean, and occupy less space. Where rolled many millions of waves now stand many millions of miles of firm rocks, their bases fast to old ocean's sand, their tops peeping above old ocean's blue waves. On these islands man has already placed his habitation, rearing all that man requires in food and luxury from a prolific soil and balmy atmosphere. Yet still he who first created the zoophite and taught him his work, still continues him in incessant toil, to pursue his work and build up reef after reef; island succeeding island, and finally a continent succeeding them. Cast the eye along the zone herein mentioned, and it will be seen the zoophites are stretching their habitations from the coast of China and India towards the continent of America. On the Atlantic side they are pushing out Florida towards the Bahamas clear to the coast of South America, hedging in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean sea. These two sheets of water must eventually become lakes; the zoophite is still at work more rapidly in the Gulf, near the coast of Mexico, than elsewhere. I account for this from the warmer temperature of the waters and subterranean fires, which no doubt exist beneath the Gulf near the crust of the earth. We judge this fact from the bitumen constantly floating up from the bottom of the Gulf, much of which is seen adhering to the coral formations.

The shores of the Mediterranean have perceptibly risen, or the waters must have receded from them from some cause. Geologists and most all appear to agree on this point; but with your correspondent I must differ in my views. This rising of the land of Europe, Asia, and Africa, within the Mediterranean, is attributed to volcanic action. But this alteration of shoreline is not peculiar to that sea, but is continued to the Atlantic coast and other shores. Evidences in marl formations, and submarine shells and teeth of sea animals, which abound in many places in Virginia, Jersey, along the coast of Florida and Louisiana, show these lands to have been once submerged. These marl beds correspond in appearance with conglomerate shell formations found among coral reefs and the southern shores of this continent. The whole of Florida indicates it was once submerged, as among its particles of white sand, shell, or coral, sand can be detected either by the eye or analysis. These conglomerates of shell are considered the best materials for building forts, being both solid and durable, and resisting the blow given it by shot or shell, causing them to rebound, in consequence of its elasticity.

Again, Mr. Schetterly remarks: "Notwithstanding the 'subsidence of the waters in all large basins, I have no idea 'that the actual quantity appertaining to our planet is under-'going a diminution." Should it be admitted that the waters of the ocean are driven into a smaller space by the upheavings of land by subterranean fires, the shores on known coasts would appear to sink in consequence of the rising of these ejected waters from the surface of these upheavings; harbors would deepen, and rivers be thrown back on their course, overflowing cities, towns, and countries. But we have sufficient evidence to show (and your able and intelligent correspondent admits it) that rivers and lakes are continually subsiding. The question is, What becomes of the waters? We have shown that the substances which form the waters of the ocean are converted into solids, not annihilated, as some imagine, but, being solidified, occupy a less space; and this process is continually going on; it is one of the incomprehensible arrangements of the Divine hand which assist to make up as a part the whole of his admirable design.

My own mind has not yet been fully satisfied with the theories advanced by geologists on internal upheavings and volcanic formations. Your correspondent has advanced a hypothesis on this subject; and, as he has treated it in so masterly a style, it is to be hoped he will continue the subject. It is one of those subjects which, in connexion with others, the scientific world are now agitating—one on which any information that can be elicited will be received by the community with interest. I here must close, as I see by my paper that I have already exceeded my limits; but must return my thanks to Mr. Schetterly for the valuable hints he has thrown out, relating to the subsidence of lakes, &c., as he has confirmed me more in the truth of my theory. It is to be hoped he will not hide his light under a bushel; for one, I have read his short piece with much pleasure, and derived information from it. A discussion with so pleasant and able a writer gives me pleasure, even should I meet with a defeat, as on these points defeat or victory establishes a truth. I hope he will continue his subject of volcanic action.

Yours, &c. W. D. PORTER.

MECHANISM, No. XII.—BY JOSIAH HOLBROOK.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

A turning lathe is an instrument of science, skill, and taste; boundless in each, consequently of usefulness and pleasure. The varieties of work capable of being done by the lathe are numberless and nameless. Each new piece of work suggests several others.

The first most simple thing to be made by a lathe is the cylinder, a round stick. Next is the cone, a cylinder tapered to a point at one end. Then the sphere, a perfectly round body. These give the starting point, the foundation, for all other round bodies. Among the articles readily made by a lathe are boxes of endless variety, handles, knobs for doors, and sundry other purposes; letter stamps, sand boxes, screws, needle cases, canes, rake teeth, pins, and trundles, tops, minerals and various tools polished, drillings made, spools, bobbins, plates, cups, &c.

Besides an endless variety of sundries, three articles of very great importance, each constantly enlarging, may be made by the lathe, as a source of instruction, amusement, and profit to those preparing for future usefulness and respectability. These are globes, surveyor's compasses, and microscopes. After obtaining a globe print, (not difficult,) any boy, or girl either, can make their own globes, simply by turning a sphere of the right size and pasting upon it the print. After the globe is covered, paint and varnish will put on the finish; the whole exactly fitted to young hands and inquisitive minds. With globes, balls for orreries, telluriums, and other astronomical and geographical illustrations, will naturally come in the train.

By the use of a lathe every boy can make his own surveyor's compass. It would, of course, be simple, just such as would be best fitted for his first experiments in surveying. The box could be made of wood, the needle magnetized by the pupil himself, and the figures for the dial-plate, the sight, and every thing essential for his surveying experiment, could be made by the pupil's own hands. His scientific knowledge and his practical skill would begin and advance together.

Microscopes vary in price from twenty-five cents to five hundred dollars. By a little skill in the use of the lathe, any boy or girl of ten years old could grind a lens for a simple microscope, to be used by themselves and their friends. Perhaps it would be difficult to conceive of a much more instructive or entertaining household utensil or pocket companion than a microscope. It virtually creates a new world, surrounding us on every side. It may well be doubted whether any one thing would add more to the amount of human happiness than a microscope or magnifying glass in every family in the world, especially if made by the younger members.

It is not necessary further to enlarge upon the uses of a turning lathe to show its great importance as an instrument of instruction and entertainment in every school and family too. No one can doubt that it would do more to cure truants and prevent rowdyism than the largest supply of the "*juice of the birch*" in schools, or houses … of refuge for juvenile delinquents on every other corner of the streets in all our principal cities.

EXPERIMENTS.—Within a few weeks past sundry teachers and parents in Washington have encouraged their pupils and children to prepare specimens of writing, drawing, mechanism, &c., as offerings to patriotism and to science, to be distributed by the hands of Government functionaries, both of our own and foreign countries, for exhibition at agricultural fairs, &c. As could be doubted by no one, all concerned give their united testimony in proof of extraordinary improvement, both of the hands and minds of pupils thus vigorously directed to so high an object.

GROWTH AND MANUFACTURE OF TEA IN THE UNITED STATES.

GREENVILLE, (S. C.) JULY 4, 1851.

To the Editor of the Journal of Commerce:

DEAR SIR: Upon this national holyday a national claim may be appropriately answered, although it does not come with the sound of cannon or the blast of a trumpet.

On the 28th ultimo a further advance was made in the progress of American tea, which will answer some of the calls of the public and tranquillize the doubts and fears of the timorous. On that day I plucked from several of my green tea plants a small quantity of tea leaves, and proceeded to dry and convert them into tea. The small number of my plants, and the partial growth of the leaves, forbid my attempting to gather beyond a sufficiency for experiment; but enough, I apprehend, to confirm and establish the important facts that the tea plant of China is congenial to our climate; that the tea is pure American growth, unmixed with any other herb or material; that it is cured by solar heat alone, and is in every respect the genuine tea of China tea plants. Its fragrance, flavor, and physical qualities may undoubtedly be changed by the process of manipulation and manufacture. But my object was to obtain the unchangeable natural properties of the leaf grown in this country, and under the influences of soil, atmosphere, and local circumstances peculiar to its present condition. Whether the taste of the tea corresponds with that of Congou, Gunpowder, Hyson, Bohea, or of any other kind, is of small consequence. If the United States can produce one good quality of tea from the China plant, the various kinds of soil, the diversity of climate, temperature, and location will produce every kind that grows in China, and satisfy the national demand, so far as concerns that article.

July 4, 1851.—I have now before me a pot of fresh Green tea, from my own plantation, the first I have enjoyed. Having no experimental evidence in this country of the effect of curing tea by solar heat only, contrary to the Chinese, Indian, and Javian mode of curing by firing, or roasting in iron kettles, I felt some reluctance to expose this my first experiment to the public gaze, and therefore conducted the whole, from the picking of the leaves to drinking the tea, in a private way. I am much gratified with the result of this my first essay in manufacturing American tea. The drying is so simple that any farmer in the Union can make his own tea, with the same certainty and the same ease as he can make his own bread. The fragrance is not so high as imported Hyson tea, but the taste is far more pure and clean in the mouth, although it leaves the stamp of fresh made tea, or rather a tea from a fresh leaf. It has not the slightest disagreeable taste, but has a full delicious flavor, indicating, in an eminent degree, perfect purity, and the presence of a sweet refreshing beverage. Connoisseurs will perhaps measure the quality of my tea by their own, to which they are accustomed. But the comparison will not hold good. My tea is so peculiar, as I always use it in the Chinese way, without sugar or milk, and have the taste of the tea only, and cannot easily be mistaken in the flavor and true properties of the tea. If the tea be good, any thing and every thing added to it is a detriment; if bad, use as much sugar and milk as will neutralize the bad qualities, and leave nothing but the taste of sugar and milk. I do assure you that I am so delighted with my pot of tea that I have drank of it half a dozen times whilst writing this article, and nearly exhausted the teapot. My black tea plants, since their removal in April, have grown much slower than the green tea plants. Indeed the green tea plant is a much more hardy plant than the black. I have written an article upon the Assam and Himalayah tea, but omit it at present rather than swell this communication.

Your obedient servant,

JUNIUS SMITH, LL.D.

P. S. July 5.—I kept part of a pot of my tea until this morning, and took a tumbler cold. It is most excellent, and a shade higher colored than Hyson tea. But the taste is superior to any China tea I have drank, always excepting a few pounds from Archangel, which came overland from the North of China, and which I believe was cured by solar heat. At any rate, it was, in my judgment, the finest tea I ever drank.

J. S.

A CURIOSITY.—Last week the workmen at Power's Summit, on the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad, found a petrified snake, the size of which would seem to indicate that in this region at least that species of reptile had greatly degenerated. His snakeship was imbedded in the solid limestone rock, sixty feet below the earth's surface. Its size is enormous, sixteen feet in length, and in the middle at least four inches in diameter. Although its substance is completely assimilated to the rock in which it was imbedded, it still looks surprisingly natural, indeed almost as perfect in "form and feature" as when alive. How his snakeship got so far beneath the surface, and how long he has lain there, are questions which we leave to the scientific.—*Beaver (Pa.) Star.*

The New York Tribune relates an interesting anecdote of the sagacity of a dog in saving the life of a child of Mr. Robinson, of Flatbush, Long Island. This gentleman has two dogs, a small spaniel and a large half-breed deer hound. The small dog was playing with Mr. R.'s child near a cistern, when the child fell head foremost into the water; the agonized mother, who from a window witnessed the occurrence, saw the spaniel run to the kennel of the hound, who instantly ran to the spot, and before the mother could reach the child the noble animal had placed it in safety. Instinct might have induced the small dog to attempt a rescue, but evidently knowing his inability to do so, what prevented him from trying, and caused him, quick as thought, to fetch the stronger dog?

A news-boy was heard to say that he had quit selling papers, and had gone into the mesmerizing business. "I get five dollars a week," said he, "for playing." "Playing what?" asked one of his comrades. "*Possum*," replied the boy.